Analysing The Role Of Social Media In Shaping Customer Opinion And Preference

M.MENAKADEVI Dr. A. ANANDALAKSHMY, & R.V. NITHYA SRI

Department of Commerce Accounting and Taxation, Dr.N.G.P.Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu-641048, India.

Professor, Department of Commerce with Accounting and Taxation, Dr.N.G.P.Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu-641048, India.

Department of Commerce Accounting and Taxation, Dr.N.G.P.Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu-641048, India.

Abstract: In today's fast changing digital world, social media has evolved into an essential instrument for molding customer ideas and preferences. This research investigates the impact of social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter on consumer behavior, focusing on how users engage with sponsored content, influencer marketing, and commercials. The study emphasizes the influence of user-generated content (UGC), peer evaluations, and targeted marketing on purchase choices and brand perceptions. The research technique included collecting primary data from social media users via questionnaires. The findings indicate that visual material, particularly video-based media, has a considerable impact on consumer choices, with Instagram and YouTube appearing as the most influential platforms. The survey concludes that influencer marketing is an effective tool, since the majority of respondents trust influencer recommendations more than traditional advertising. Furthermore, tailored advertising and interactive social media campaigns significantly influence brand engagement and customer decision-making. The research also investigates the level of effect that social media has on various demographic groups. The results show that younger customers, particularly those aged 18-24, depend extensively on social media when making purchase decisions, but older age groups are more skeptical of influencer recommendations. Furthermore, consumers' content choices differ, with video-based adverts and instructive posts gaining the most engagement, while static picture ads and carousel postings create comparably less interaction. Finally, the study highlights the importance of social media in determining current consumer behavior. Social media platforms have developed from simple communication channels to strong marketing tools that impact attitudes, preferences, and purchase decisions. Businesses that effectively use social media marketing, such as customer-centric methods, engaging storytelling strategies, and influencer partnerships, may boost their brand visibility and develop long-term client loyalty.

Index Terms - **Social media, Customer behavior, Influencer marketing, Purchase decisions, Brand Perception, Trust and transparency**.

Introduction

Social media has become a potent instrument in the current digital era for influencing ideas, influencing consumer behavior, and changing preferences. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have grown essential to how consumers find, assess, and connect with companies as they continue to dominate online interactions. Social media's widespread use has completely changed marketing tactics and shifted the balance of power in favor of customers, who can now more easily access, share, and discuss goods and services than ever before. This has led to a new environment in which peer reviews, influencer endorsements, and brand interaction on social media are increasingly influencing customer decisions rather than just traditional advertising.

Statement of problem

This study explores how social media interactions, content creation, and influencer marketing influence consumer perceptions and preferences. By addressing gaps in current knowledge, it aims to provide companies with actionable insights to effectively use social media. The research highlights the importance of engaging content and strategic influencer collaborations to enhance customer engagement. Ultimately, it equips businesses with the knowledge to refine marketing strategies, improve customer relationships, and achieve sustained growth in the digital marketplace.

Objectives

➢ To analyse the demographic role of social media in shaping customer attitude and behaviour.

➢ To examine the impact of social media on customer opinion and preference.

➢ To evaluate customer satisfaction with social media.

➢ To identify the challenges faced by customer when using social media.

Scope of the study

The study will examine how social media usage varies by demographic and how much social media material influences various age groups, financial brackets, and geographic areas. Additionally, the study will evaluate how consumer opinions and loyalty are shaped by user contact, trust, and emotional engagement.

Sample size: In this research work, Sample Size is 132

Sampling Area: The study was conducted in rural areas of Coimbatore District were only limited population was chosen on convenient random sampling.

Methodology:

Both primary and secondary data were used for the present study. For collecting the first-hand information one hundred thirty two respondent were chosen by convenient random sampling method. Secondary data have been collected from websites, magazines and journals.

Limitation of the study:

✓ The study was restricted to 132 respondents only.

✓ The research was entirely focused only on Coimbatore City.

✓ The result would be varying according to the individuals as well as time.

Analytical Tools:

The following are the analytical tools applied for the data collected:

✓ Simple Percentage Analysis

✓ Chi-Square

✓ Correlation

Review of Literature

Das and Gupta (2023) "Social Media Marketing and Consumer Opinion Shaping" explore how social media marketing campaigns shape consumer opinions, especially through emotional appeal. They argue that brands leveraging humor, nostalgia, and social causes in their campaigns on platforms like Facebook and Instagram

have greater success in creating positive consumer opinions. The emotional connection formed through these campaigns is instrumental in shaping long-term preferences.

Alharbi and Alshammari (2022) "Social Media as a Tool for Consumer Education" focus on how social media serves as an educational tool that influences consumer preferences. They argue that social media platforms allow consumers to educate themselves about products and services, thus improving decision-making. Through tutorials, reviews, and informational posts, brands and influencers help customers understand the value of products, thereby shaping their preferences and opinions more effectively

Chahal and Rani (2021) "The Impact of Social Media Engagement on Consumer" Loyalty focus on the correlation between social media engagement and customer loyalty. The study reveals that direct interaction with brands on social media (e.g., responding to comments, personalized offers) significantly enhances customer loyalty. Consumers who feel that a brand listens and interacts with them on platforms like Facebook or Twitter are more likely to develop positive opinions and stronger preferences, which influences their purchasing behaviors.

Hassan and Shams (2020) "The Role of Social Media Reviews in Shaping Consumer Opinions" investigate how social media reviews influence consumer opinions. Their findings suggest that user-generated content, such as reviews on platforms like Facebook and Yelp, plays a significant role in altering consumer perceptions. Positive reviews increase trust in products and services, while negative reviews can swiftly damage a brand's reputation.

Pereira et al. (2020) "The Effectiveness of Social Media Advertising on Consumer Preferences" explore how social media advertising influences consumer preferences. The research concludes that targeted ads based on user behavior and interests are more effective than general ads, as they resonate with consumers specific needs. The personalization of ads on platforms like Facebook and Instagram leads to a higher likelihood of consumer engagement and preference toward the advertised brand.

Table: 1 Simple percentage analysis
Showing personal factor, Preferred social media, Brand motivation &Factor influencing

Factor	Option	No of respondents	percentage
Age	18 – 24	101	77
	25 – 35	24	18
	36 – 50	7	5
Gender	Male	79	60
	Female	53	40
Educational qualification	High School	18	10
	Under graduate degree	94	71
	Post graduate degree	13	10
	Professional degree	12	9
Occupation	Student	89	67
	Business	20	15
	Employee	18	14
	Professional	5	4
Monthly income	Below 20,000	80	61
	20,000 - 40,000	25	19
	40,000 - 60,000	6	4
	Above 60,000	9	7
Marital status	Married	29	22
	Unmarried	103	78
Preferred social media	YouTube	37	28
	Facebook	6	5

|	Instagram	89	67
Brand motivation	Engaging content	43	33
	Discounts and promotions	22	17
	Recommendation from friends/family	24	18
	Brand loyalty	17	13
	New product launches	26	19
Influencer impact	Extremely influential	16	12
	Very influential	42	32
	Moderately influential	39	30
	Slightly influential	15	11
	Not influential	20	15
Content influences	User - generated content	20	15
	Influencer endorsements	28	21
	Brand advertisement	43	33
	Customer reviews	34	26
	Expert opinions	7	5

Interpretation: The study reveals that Majority 101 (77%) of the respondent are in 18 – 24 years age group. Majority 79 (60%) of the respondents are Male. Majority 94 (71%) of the respondents are completed undergraduate. Majority 89 (67%) of the respondents are Students. Majority 80 (61%) of the respondents are earning income below 20,000. Majority 103 (78%) of the respondents are unmarried. Majority 89 (67%) of the respondents are using social media frequently on Instagram. Most 43 (33%) of the respondents are selected Engaging content that motivates them to follow a brand on social media. Most 42 (32%) of the respondents are Very influential by social media influencers in their purchasing decision. Most 43 (33%) of the respondents are selected Brand advertisements that influences their buying decision mostly.

Figure 1: Monthly income
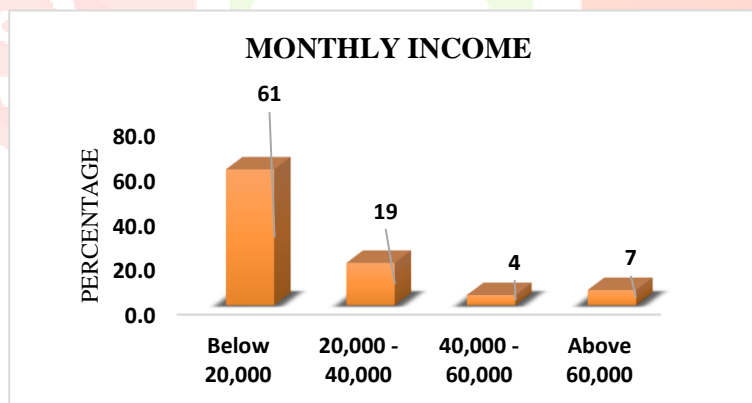
Figure 2: Preferred social media
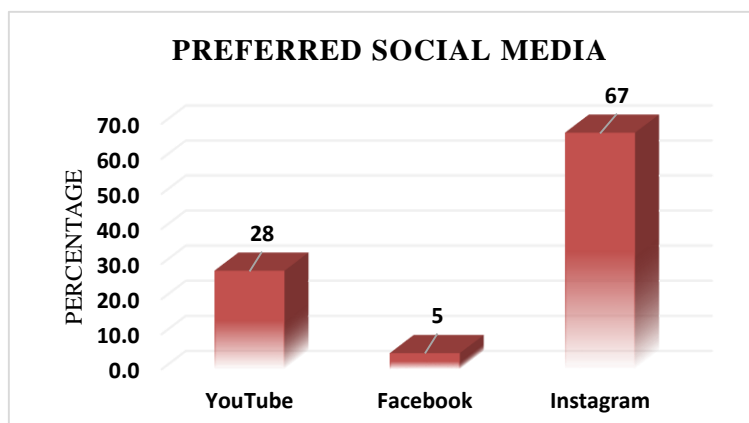
Figure 3: Influencer impact
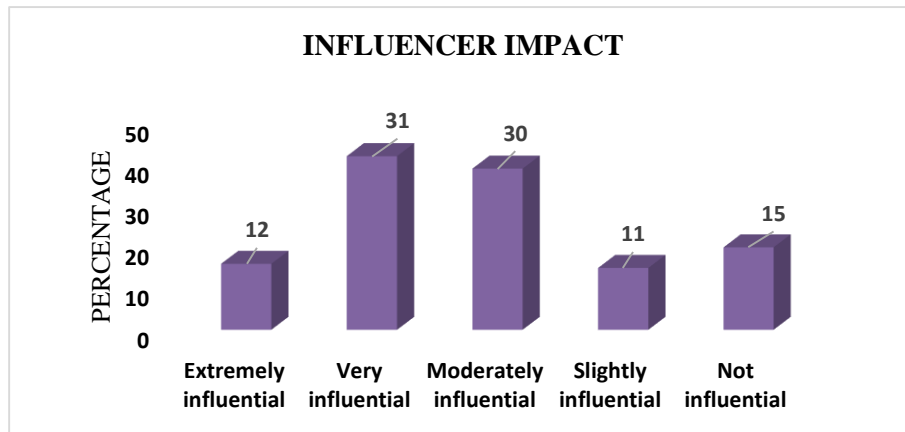
Table 2
Satisfaction Level of Respondents

Particulars	Content quality	Customer engagement	Authenticity	Regular updates	Visual appeal
Highly satisfied	46	18	20	20	30
satisfied	32	56	30	43	28
Neutral	20	24	46	20	24
Dis satisfied	0	2	4	15	4
Highly dissatisfied	2	0	0	2	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Primary data

Interpretation:

The above table shows that, 46% of the people are highly satisfied with content quality, followed by 56% of the respondents are satisfied with customer engagement, followed by 46% of the respondents are neutral with authenticity, followed by 43% of the respondents are satisfied with regular updates, followed by 30% of the respondents are highly satisfied to visual appeal.

Figure 4: Satisfaction Level of Respondents
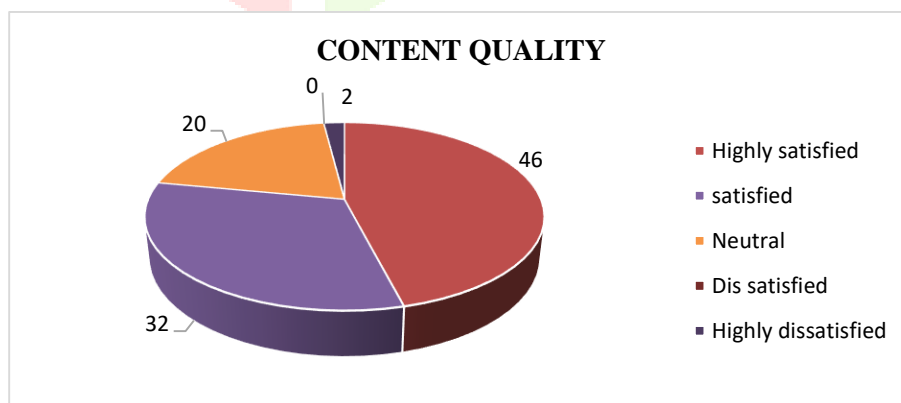
Relationship between educational qualification and preference of social media content

Table 3 Chi-square Test- 1

Calculated value	Table value	Degree of freedom	Level of significance	Results
32.371	30.437	12	0.002	Rejected

*S- Signification at 5% level

Interpretation: The table deals with the calculated value of X² (32.371) is greater than the table value (30.437) so the null hypothesis (0.002) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Relationship between monthly income and level of influences of influencers in social media

Table 4 Chi-square Test- 2

Calculated value	Table value	Degree of freedom	Level of significance	Results
12.545	21.026	12	0.403	Accepted

*S- Significant at 5% level

Interpretation: The table deals with the calculated value of X^2 (12.545) is lesser than the table value (21.026) so the null hypothesis accepted (0.403).

Relationship between age and hours spend on social media

Table 5 Correlation- 1

	PEARSON CORRELATION	SIGNIFICANCE (2-TAILED)
INTERPRETATION	-0.509	0.504

Source: Primary data

*S- Significant at 5% level

Interpretation: The derived correlation result is -0.509 in Karl Pearson correlation with level of significance (2-tailed) is 0.504 It can be concluded that there is negative correlation is very weak correlation between Monthly Income of the respondents and Price range willing to pay more than conventional vehicles.

Relationship between frequency of used for social media platform and level of likeliness for recommended

Table 6 Correlation- 2

	PEARSON CORRELATION	SIGNIFICANCE (2-TAILED)
INTERPRETATION	-0.035	0.688

Source: Primary data

*S- Significant at 5% level

Interpretation: The derived correlation result is -0.035 in Karl Pearson correlation with level of significance (2-tailed) is 0.504 It can be concluded that there is very weak negative correlation between frequency of used for social media platform and level of likeliness for recommended

Findings: Based on the result majority of the respondent are in 18 – 24 years age group. Most of the respondents are Male. Majority of the respondents completed undergraduate. Majority of the respondents are Students. Most of the respondents are earning income below 20,000. Majority of the respondents are unmarried. Majority of the respondents are using social media frequently on Instagram. Most of the respondents are selected Engaging content that motivates them to follow a brand on social media. Most of the respondents are Very influential by social media influencers in their purchasing decision. Most of the respondents are selected Brand advertisements that influences their buying decision mostly.

Suggestions: Increase the sample size and include participants from different demographic groups and geographical areas to offer more thorough and broad insights on how social media affects consumer choices. To better understand customer behavior, motivations, and emotional reactions to social media material, use qualitative research techniques like focus groups and in-depth interviews. Explore the influence of newer and

fast rising social media platforms like Snapchat, and Threads, which are becoming increasingly popular among younger audiences and offer new chances for marketers to communicate with customers. To encourage active engagement and improve brand-customer relationships, create more interactive and captivating content on social media platforms, such as polls, quizzes, contests, live streaming, and personalized messaging. Regularly monitor consumer feedback on social media sites, respond swiftly to comments and reviews, and address both positive and negative criticism to develop trust, demonstrate responsiveness, and promote brand loyalty.

Conclusion: The study emphasizes that how social media has a big impact on people buy nowadays. Results indicate that social media sites like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are important in determining consumer choices that influencer marketing and visual material are particularly effective. When making judgments about what to buy, consumers are depending more and more on influencer endorsements, user-generated content, and peer recommendations. Authentic connection, trust, and regular interaction are increasingly essential components of brand loyalty. Videos, articles, and live streaming are examples of content types that work very well at grabbing viewers' attention. However, the study's wider relevance is limited by its concentration on Coimbatore City. For more in-depth understanding, future studies should include a range of demographics, new platforms such as TikTok, and qualitative techniques. In the end, social media is still a very effective marketing tool, and companies who use genuine, interesting, and customer-focused approaches have a better chance of influencing consumer opinions and creating enduring connections.

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